(a) the steps Government is taking or proposing to take to clamp down on the huge market for fake mobiles (without bills) which is flourishing in India and which poses great security risk to our country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) and (b) Directions were issued to all Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS)/Unified Access Service (UAS) Licensees to make provision of Equipment Identification Register (EIR) in their network so that calls without IMEI or that with all zeros are not processed and rejected after 30th June, 2009.

Further, Government has prohibited the import of "Mobile Handsets" (Classified under Exim Code 8517) without International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) No. or with all Zeroes IMEI with immediate effect *vide* Notification No. 112(RE-2008)/2004-2009, dated 16th June, 2009 issued by Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

(c) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

Refund of call charges

13. SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV:
SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that signal failure is a common feature now a days among the mobile service providers especially BSNL and MTNL; but they charge the customers even though they were not able to convey the message;

(b) the reasons for which the customers are penalized even for the service providers' technical problem;

(c) the corrective measures Government propose to introduce; and

(d) the details of the mechanism as on date to refund the call charges they have imposed on the customers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) and (b) 1. Signal failure in Cellular Mobile Telephone Network can have different effects at various stages of call:—

(i) Signal failure at call set up stage results unsuccessful call attempt and no call charges are levied to customers.

(ii) Signal failure or variations in the signal *i.e.* poor signal strength after successful establishment of call can cause one way speech, poor call quality and eventually call drop. In such cases call charges are levied to the customers upto the duration of call and rounded to the pulse rate which is generally of one minute duration.

(2) To reduce such instances of call drop or unsuccessful call attempts, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has specified Quality of Service (QoS) network related parameters and their benchmarks. TRAI monitors the performance of Basic and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service provided by various service providers through quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports (PMR). The quarterly PMR of Cellular Mobile Telephone Service of quarter ending March, 2009 received from the service provider shows that all the service areas of BSNL have been meeting the benchmarks of the network related parameters namely, Call Drop rate and Connections with Good Voice Quality, Signaling Channel Congestion (SDCCH/Paging Channel) etc. except Traffic Channel Congestion (TCH) in Kerala service area.

Similarly, the said report shows that MTNL have been meeting the benchmarks of the network related parameters except Traffic Channel Congestion (TCH) in Delhi Service area. The performance of BSNL/MTNL is comparable with the other private telecom operators in respect of Quality of service of Cellular Mobile Telephone Service.

(c) TRAI has been taking various steps to ensure quality of service by basic service and cellular mobile service providers. These steps are given below:—

(i) TRAI has been closely monitoring the performance of Basic and Cellular Mobile Service against the benchmarks specified for various parameters.

(ii) TRAI has been taking up with the service providers, wherever deficiencies are noticed in achieving the benchmarks.

(iii) TRAI had issued a direction on 29th November, 2005 to all Cellular Mobile Service Providers to ensure, by 31st December, 2005, that the quality of service parameters, including the level of Point of Interconnection (POI) congestion, in its network should be strictly within the benchmark laid down by the Authority. On analyzing the Performance Monitoring Report of the cellular mobile operators for the quarter ending December, 2005, it was revealed that while there has been some improvement in meeting the QoS benchmarks there has been increase in congestion at the POIs. The Authority, therefore, decided to issue show cause notices to those operators in whose network the number of POI having congestion above the benchmark has increased and accordingly issued show cause notices to six mobile operators on 06.03.2006. These operators have since moved Telecom Disputes Settlement Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) against the show cause notices and the matter is subjudice since March, 2006.

(iv) TRAI also undertakes assessment of the Quality of Service of Basic and Cellular Mobile Services through independent agency. The results of this audit/survey are widely published for public/stakeholders information..

(v) The Authority has reviewed the Quality of Service regulations recently and notified on 20th March, 2009 (the Standards of Quality of Service of Basic Telephone service (Wire line) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service Regulations, 2009) which will come into force *w.e.f.* 1.7.2009. In these regulations the benchmark for Call Drop Rate has been made more stringent which is $\leq$ 2% as against 3% earlier. There are pockets/localities where call drop could be a problem due to insufficient coverage, interference etc. To address this issue, TRAI has specified in these new regulations a parameter called (% of worst affected cells having more than 3% TCH drop) enabling the monitoring of the network at cell level by the service providers.

(vi) TRAI has written to Chief Executive Officers of all the cellular mobile service providers to address call drop and to take necessary steps to reduce the incidences of call drop in the network and improve the Quality of Service.

(d) Presently the charging is done by mobile telecom operators on per minute basis and technically it becomes difficult to link the incomplete call (dropped calls) with the charging system. Therefore, for such instances of call drops it may not be possible to implement a refund mechanism.

Strike in MTNL

14. SHRI MOHAMMED ADEEB:
SHRI SABIR ALI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some employees of the MTNL, Delhi went on strike in the 3rd week of May, 2009;

(b) if so, whether Government would provide some compensation or rebate to the consumers/subscribers who did not get satisfactory service during that period;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) Sir, a section of Executive Association resorted to non-cooperation with effect from 18.5.2009 and withdrew the agitation on 20.05.2009.

(b) and (c) Government does not provide any rebate or compensation to the consumers/subscribers of any Service Providers, who do not get satisfactory service during period of strike/agitation. However, rent rebate as admissible under Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's Regulation on Quality of service of Basis and Cellular Mobile Telephone Services, 2005 as amended from time to time, is given by Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited to its subscribers/consumers in eligible cases.